

Development of Snadder Empathway (Snakes Ladders Empathy Pathway) Media in Group Guidance Services to Foster Empathy for Junior High School Students

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Abstract

This research aims to produce the "Snadder Empathway" game media in group guidance to foster empathy for junior high school students. The research method using Research and Development (R&D) is adopted from Borg and Gall with 10 development steps, but in this study it is only carried out with 5 steps, namely preliminary studies, planning, media development, and product tests involving experts and potential users. The research instrument uses an acceptability questionnaire for expert and potential user tests. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique uses the Inter-rater Agreement Model and descriptive statistics. The results of the study based on the content expert test, media expert and prospective user test showed an expert test index of 1 in terms of usability, accuracy aspect, and feasibility aspect which means that it has very high validity. Meanwhile, based on the results of the descriptive statistical test, the content expert test on the usability, accuracy aspect and feasibility aspect, it showed an average score of 4.00 that was declared to meet the acceptability criteria. The results of the media expert test showed an average of 3.95 on the display, 3.91 on the preliminary and 4.00 on the game media. In the test, prospective users (school counselors) showed a score in terms of usability, accuracy and feasibility of 4.00. The test results of prospective users (students) on the usability and accuracy aspect of 100% or in the category are very useful and very precise. Meanwhile, in the feasibility aspect, 94% are in the very feasible category. Thus, it can be concluded that the Snadder Empathway game media is stated to be very useful, very precise, and very feasible that is acceptable both theoretically and practically in fostering empathy for junior high school students.

1. Introduction

Humans are social creatures who cannot live alone and need each other. so that they can get to know and establish relationships with other individuals to meet their life needs. Social relationships in life make individuals have to learn to understand and respect and understand differences with others in order to form interactions and maintain interactions with each other. Through social interaction, we can understand social norms, cultural values, and the language we use in daily communication. In realizing good social relationships, social skills are needed, one of which is empathy skills (Budiningsih, 2004).

According to Goleman, empathy is an important element in emotional intelligence and social interaction to support crucial social competence in the world of work (Goleman, 2020). In addition, Rogers in Praptiningsih (2025) also reviews empathy as an individual's ability to understand others as if entering themselves, so that they can feel and experience the feelings and experiences of others without losing their own identity (Praptiningsih, 2025). according to Davis in Taufik (2012), empathy has multidimensional characteristics consisting of several aspects. First, there is fantasy-empathy, which is the tendency of individuals to feel and adopt the emotions and actions of imaginary characters that appear in books, movies, or games (Taufik, 2012).

Empathy in social and professional life is very complex and crucial, as empathy can encourage a person to take steps to help and realize that others need help, which will result in a feeling of happiness if he or she can perform that act of help (Mulyawati et al., 2022). In addition, Utami stated that empathy is important for students because they can establish good relationships with their peers so as to help students understand how to communicate, solve problems, and participate in group activities (Utami, 2024). More than that, the role of empathy is very important in developing good social skills, providing a positive influence on meaningful social relationships (Aulia et al., 2024). so that they can get to know and establish relationships with other individuals to meet their life needs. Social relationships in life make individuals have to learn to understand and respect and understand differences with others in order to form interactions and maintain interactions with each other. Through social interaction, we can understand social norms, cultural values, and the language we use in daily

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The reality at school is often inversely proportional. Many learners have ideal empathy. For example, Fitriyani (2022) research at MTs Nurul Islam Jati Agung South Lampung obtained data from 13 out of 22 students or 59.091% who had low empathy (Fitriyani, 2022). Meanwhile, there are 9 or 1.98% of students who enter the medium category. In addition, the research conducted by Anggraini, et al. at SMPN 3 Waru found that there were 3 people or 10% who had low empathy, while there were 6 people or 20% who had moderate empathy, and 21 people or 70% had high empathy (Anggraini et al., 2023). Then research conducted by Mahesa and Setiawati at SMP Negeri 2 Purwosari found that 9 out of 102 or 9.18% of students had low empathy while there were 9 students or 9.18% who had moderate empathy (Mahesa & Setiawati, 2022).

Therefore, targeted and innovative interventions through guidance relevant to adolescent characteristics are urgently needed to foster empathy and prevent adverse impacts that may arise. So, efforts are needed to develop students' empathy. Guidance and counseling have an important role in developing empathy through a variety of relevant theoretical approaches, as well as a lap to the professional framework of guidance and counseling that has broad tasks, objectives and scope of services in supporting the holistic development of learners. Guidance and counseling are support services for students, both individuals and groups, to be independent and develop optimally, in personal, social, learning, and career aspects through various supporting services and activities in accordance with existing norms (Prayitno & Amti, 2004). Group guidance as a type of guidance and counseling services has great potential in supporting the development of psychological aspects of students, including empathy. School counselors are expected to provide simple, clear, and useful services for students. That is by providing a type of service that utilizes the media.

One type of media in guidance and counseling is in the form of games. Piaget in Rahayu (2021) sees games as a medium that fosters individual cognitive development (Rahayu, 2021). Games as one of the methods in counseling guidance are explained by child counseling expert, Katryn Geldard and her husband David Geldard, in her book which discusses various game techniques as a communication link in counseling (Geldard, 2008). Rambe et al. (2023) in their research stated that educational games can foster a sense of empathy (Rambe et al., 2023). In addition, in the research Khisbiyah (2021) stated that empathy can be improved through traditional games ranging from gobag sodor, Sundaname and boy-boyan (Khisbiyah et al., 2021).

This research aims to develop Snadder Empathway media that can be used by school counselors in providing group counseling services, especially to foster a sense of empathy. The Snadder Empathway game is a game inspired by the traditional snake and ladder game that was created to foster students' empathy. The Game Board is different from the conventional snake and ladder board which usually has a simple numbered checkered path, the Snadder Empathway is modified into a rectangular board with a thematic frame around empathy.

It is hoped that the development of this media can make a practical contribution to school counselors as well as schools in an effort to improve the psychological well-being and academic potential of students through

creative and interesting interventions conducted by Sunarti and Anastasya (2023) shows that snake and ladder games have proven to be effective in fostering students' emotional intelligence. In addition, in research conducted by Ashari et al. (2024) which shows that snake and ladder games have an effective impact on fostering aspects of children's emotional development (Ashari et al., 2024). So from existing research, it can be concluded that games using snakes and ladders can be used as a medium for emotional intelligence and social-emotional development.

The advantages of Snadder Empathway media are: 1) The design uses attractive colors and images. 2) There is a handbook that makes it easier for school counselors and participants to understand the gameplay. 3) This medium adopts popular games, 4) This medium is in the form of a board as well as a place for game components, so it is not scattered. Meanwhile, the disadvantages of the Snadder Empathway media are: 1) this game component is relatively small, so it is prone to being lost 2) it takes time to compile the game media.

2. Method

This research employed a Research and Development (R&D) methodology focused on the creation and validation of educational products. The development design aimed to produce a systematic guidance and counseling service media, encompassing preliminary research, planning, media development, expert testing (content and media expert testing), and finally, prospective user testing. Through this R&D approach, media development was conducted in a measured manner to ensure that the resulting product had a strong theoretical foundation and practical feasibility for implementation in school settings.

The research instruments used in this development focused on acceptability instruments to measure the product's feasibility. These instruments were divided into three main types: content expert testing (material), media expert testing, and prospective user testing (school counselors). These three instruments were designed to validate the media's accuracy, usability, and feasibility in the field. Additionally, a student questionnaire was used to obtain direct responses regarding the target audience's experiences using the media.

Data analysis techniques varied depending on the type of instrument and the respondents. For data obtained from content experts, media experts, and guidance counselors, analysis was conducted using the Inter-Rater Agreement Model technique to ensure the objectivity and validity of the product content. Meanwhile, data obtained from student questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics or percentages without using inter-rater techniques to observe response trends and the general level of media appeal to end users.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of this study are sorted into two main forms. First, quantitative data that serves as a benchmark for statistical accuracy. This data is processed through an inter-rater agreement model analysis to see agreement between experts, which is then strengthened by data processing using the SPSS for Windows version 26 program. This research also highly appreciates qualitative descriptive data. This data houses the "voices" of experts and potential users in the form of valuable inputs. The following is an explanation of the results of expert and prospective user tests consisting of quantitative and descriptive data.

3.1. Media Expert Result

In the expert evaluation stage, the developed Snadder Emphatway game media was then assessed by content experts to determine the level of product feasibility based on usability, accuracy, and feasibility aspects. The results of the content experts' assessment of the Snadder Emphatway game media can be seen in Table 1, while suggestions, input, and product revision results based on expert evaluation are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 1. Content Expert Ratings of Game Media Snadder Empathway

Assessment Aspects	Standar deviation	
	Expert 1	Expert 2
Usability Aspects	0.30	0.47
Precision aspects	0.33	0.48
Eligibility Aspects	0.34	0.38

Table 2. Advice from Content Experts on the Game Media Snadder Empathway

Expert input	Revised aspects	Revised Results
Back cover: unclear profile writing.	Visual Cover Design	Adjust the color contrast and font size of the profile section to make it easier to read.
Grammar rearrangement, special purpose not yet	Language Structure	Improve sentence structure according to PUEBI
Pay attention to language that is still typo	Text Editorial	Thorough proofreading to remove typos

Despite receiving positive feedback, content experts still provided several constructive comments to improve the quality of the Snadder Empathway game. This feedback emphasized that the game is fundamentally useful, highly appropriate, and highly feasible for implementation. However, minor improvements are still needed for optimal use by school counselors and students.

One crucial finding requiring follow-up is the need to adjust the color contrast and font size in the user profile section to enhance readability. This is crucial because readability is the primary foundation for conveying messages in games. If the contrast between text and background is too low or the font size is too small, users will experience eye fatigue, which hinders information absorption. According to Anisah et al. (2025), appropriate arrangement of visual elements, including contrast and typography, serves to direct students' cognitive attention to important information, thus making the learning process more effective and efficient (Anisah et al. 2025).

In line with the text arrangement in the game, content experts also provided feedback regarding the Snadder Empathway game cards, which were deemed to still use ambiguous wording and unclear instructions. The wording of the Snadder Empathway game cards is crucial to prevent students from being confused by the instructions, making the message difficult to understand. Mistakes in the wording of instructions can lead to students engaging in actions that contradict the empathy values being taught. Poor wording can lead to students engaging in actions that contradict the empathy values being taught (Ramadhan et al. 2025).

Mistakes in wording in the guidebook have also drawn attention from content experts. The presence of typographical errors (typos) in the Snadder Empathway guidebook demonstrates the need for mechanical precision in language development. Typos in the guidebook can alter the meaning of instructions, reduce readability, and, most crucially, undermine user confidence in the quality of the material. In a guidebook, every word must serve as precise direction; a single typo in a technical term or game step can cause operational confusion in the field (Natsir 2022). Therefore, correcting typos is not simply a matter of neatness, but also an effort to ensure that students' cognitive flow in understanding empathy procedures is not disrupted by unnecessary visual obstacles.

As a form of media improvement, content experts suggested the need to add a brief technical explanation regarding the challenges of using the Snadder Empathway game. This addition is considered crucial to anticipate potential technical issues that may arise during media use, both in the game media aspect and in its implementation. Adding a brief technical explanation regarding the challenges and solutions will help school counselors, as the primary users, quickly resolve issues without disrupting group guidance services. Proper media use not only presents the main material but also provides clear operational instructions so that the media can be used effectively and sustainably in group guidance services (Titin et al. 2023). The arrangement of these visual elements must provide understandable and engaging visualizations, thereby conveying the intended message.

3.2. Media Expert Result

After passing the testing process by content experts, the Snadder Emphatway game media was then tested by media experts to evaluate the product quality in terms of appearance, design, and technical use. The results of the media expert's evaluation of the Snadder Emphatway game media are presented in Table 3, while suggestions, input, and revision results based on the testing by media experts are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 3. Media Members' Assessment of the Media Snadder Empathway Game

Assessment Aspects	Standard deviation	
	Expert 1	Expert 2
Aspect of Display	0.20	0.28
Preliminary Aspects	0.25	0.48
Eligibility Aspects	0.00	0.32

Table 4. Advice from Media Experts on Game Media Snadder Empathway

Expert input	Revised aspects	Revised Results
Writing spaces in the manual should be arranged and equalized right and left	Layout and Typography.	All text in the manual has been organized using the Justify format (right-left aligned) and the spacing between spaces has been neat to be consistent.
The background color of the book can be changed to a softer color.	Author Component Design.	All text in the manual has been organized using the Justify format (right-left aligned) and the spacing between spaces has been neat to be consistent.
Writing the author's biodata in the guidebook is better given a background.	Author Component Design.	The author's bio section has been added to the background element (shape/box) to provide emphasis and clarify the readability of the text.

Expert input	Revised aspects	Revised Results
In the guidebook for teachers, it is better to attach a tutorial to open the Snadder Empathway media.	Completeness of Content	A special chapter or attachment has been added in the form of a step-by-step guide (tutorial) on how to open the Snadder Empathway game media in the guidebook.

Based on the results of the test of game media experts, Snadder Empathway has achieved a high quality standard, which is shown by the acquisition of a score in the "Very High" category in all aspects of the assessment. Nonetheless, media experts provided some constructive notes focused on refining the aesthetic and functional aspects of the media. One of the main inputs is improvements to grammar, especially the equalization of spacing and paragraph formatting (right-left alignment) in the content of the guidebook. Neatness of writing is very crucial because it has a direct effect on readability and user comfort in absorbing information. This is in line with the opinion of Kustandi et al. (2021) who emphasized that text readability is a vital element in visual guidance media so that the message is not distorted and is easily understood concretely by students (Kustandi et al. 2021).

In addition to the grammar aspect, media experts suggest changing the background color of the guidebook using softer colors. The use of the right color not only serves as an attraction, but also to reduce eye fatigue when reading long instructions. As explained by Zahra and Mansoor (2024), the selection of color palettes in game-based educational media greatly determines the psychological condition of the user, where soft colors tend to create a relaxed learning atmosphere and foster students' emotional focus in guidance activities (Zahra and Mansoor 2024).

Media experts also highlighted the readability aspect of the author's biodata which requires the addition of a special background to make it look clearer and more professional. This emphasis on the identity element of the developer is important to build user trust in the credibility of the media. This is supported by the findings of Rakhmawati and Rani (2025) that clarity of identity and design professionalism in guidance media can help students visualize the material more seriously and interestingly, which in turn strengthens their involvement in the behavioral transformation process (Rakhmawati and Rani 2025).

Finally, crucial input from media experts is the need to attach a tutorial or operational technical guide to open and start the Snadder Empathway game media. The addition of this tutorial aims to minimize ambiguity and technical obstacles when school counselors implement it in the classroom. This is in line with the principle of media development from Kristanto (2025) which states that an effective innovative media must be supported by comprehensive operational guidelines to ensure the consistency and continuity of guidance services without significant technical disruptions (Kristanto 2021).

3.3. Potential User Result

After passing the expert testing phase, the Snadder Emphatway game media was then trialed on potential users to assess the level of acceptance and suitability of the product for direct use in the field. This trial involved school counselors and students as the primary users of the media in guidance group services. The results of the assessment from the school counselors are presented in table 5 and 6, while the results of the student assessments are presented in Table 7.

Table 5. Evaluation of Prospective Users (School Counselors) on Game Media Snadder Empathway

Assessment Aspects	Standar deviation	
	Expert 1	Expert 2
Usability Aspects	0.00	0.00
Precision aspects	0.00	0.00
Eligibility Aspects	0.00	0.00

Table 6. Suggestions from Prospective Users (School Counselors) to the Media Games

Input of potential users	Revised aspects	Revised Results
The image on the Snadder Empathway media is less clear/blurry, it is best to reprint it to be sharper.	Visual Quality and Image Resolution.	Snadder Empathway game media images have been reprinted in high resolution so that the images look clear, sharp, and easy to observe.

Table 7. Evaluation of Prospective Users (Participants) on Game Media Snadder Empathway.

Assessment Aspects	Total Average	Percentage
Usability Aspects	36	100%
Precision Aspects	36	94%
Eligibility Aspects	36	100%

Based on the results of the test of prospective users involving school counselors and students of UPT SMPN 16 Gresik, it can be said that the Snadder Empathway guidebook and game media have met the acceptability criteria reviewed from the aspects of usability, accuracy, and feasibility according to the assessment of school counselors. In addition, students rated the Snadder Empathway game media as a very useful, very appropriate, and very suitable medium to be used in group guidance services to foster empathetic behavior. The results of the acceptability test showed high scores in all aspects of the assessment, so this media can be said to be suitable for use and included in the very good category (Ramadhan et al. 2024). School counselors as prospective users assessed that the Snadder Empathway game media development product was very helpful in the implementation of group guidance services, especially as a means of providing treatment to students for empathy, including equality between and forever, acting independently, defending themselves, expressing honest and comfortable feelings, practicing courage and not denying the rights of others.

Empathetic behavior is an important skill that needs to be developed in students to be able to accurately understand the feelings, thoughts, and perspectives of others and respond with attentiveness and concern. In the process of developing this empathetic behavior, teachers have a very decisive role as the main guide and companion. The success of instilling empathy behavior is inseparable from the teacher's ability to choose the right strategy and service media. Teachers are required to be able to carry out learning roles as mediators, facilitators, evaluators, and supervisors, so that the use of media in learning activities and guidance services is an important need to support the achievement of the goal of developing students' empathetic behavior (Basyori 2025).

The development of the educational paradigm demands that the role of School counselors is becoming increasingly challenging. school counselors are required to be able to design and implement innovative and diverse services so that the service delivery process is not monotonous, because these conditions can hinder the formation of behavioral changes and improve students' abilities. school counselors/counselors are required to be able to provide professional, characterful, and high-value counseling services so that the service is said to be successful (Harahap and Harahap 2021). Therefore, the role of school counselors does not only focus on delivering service materials, but also on efforts to develop personal skills and understanding of students as a whole. The implementation of the Snadder Empathway game media is present as a supporting instrument for school counselors to achieve character development targets, especially in strengthening the values of empathy among junior high school students.

Assessment from the perspective of the school counselor shows that the Snadder Empathway game is a medium that is in accordance with the characteristics of junior high school students. This media is able to integrate elements of play and learning in a balanced manner in the implementation of group guidance services, thereby encouraging active involvement of students, this approach is in line with contemporary education principles that emphasize student-centered learning (Suhenda et al. 2024). In today's learning context, students are required to be able to manage academic responsibilities optimally, both in understanding learning materials, completing schoolwork, and strengthening learning independently outside the classroom. The presence of educational media provides a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience, so that the academic demands faced by students can be balanced with more varied learning strategies.

The use of Snadder Empathway game media provides opportunities for students to gain educational and interactive learning experiences in developing empathetic behaviors. Through the media, students are trained to be able to express opinions appropriately, respect others, and build empathy in social interactions (Mulyana et al. 2025). In addition, the use of the Snadder Empathway game helps students recognize empathetic behavior gradually. This shows that the Snadder Empathway game not only functions as a game medium, but also as a relevant and meaningful learning instrument in supporting students to achieve their potential maturity in the school environment. Educational games are effective in fostering learners' social skills, including interaction, cooperation, and social communication, which are important foundations in the formation of empathetic behaviors (Apriliya et al. 2025).

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded as follows: The development of the Snadder Empathway game media equipped with a guidebook for school counselors and students has successfully gone through a series of validation tests. Based on the assessment of content experts, media experts, and potential users (school counselors and students), this instrument is stated to have met the standards of usability, feasibility, and accuracy comprehensively as a means of supporting group guidance services. Theoretically, the level of acceptability of this media is in the very good category. This is evidenced by the acquisition of a perfect inter-rater agreement score of 1 from experts. In line with these results, the assessment of school counselors as prospective users gave a high score in terms of usability, accuracy and feasibility of 4.00 which confirmed the position of this media as a tool that is very feasible to implement. Practical acceptance can also be seen from the positive response of junior high school students.

The test results showed a good response from students, where in the usability aspect as much as 100% was in the very useful category, the accuracy aspect of 100% assessed the media as very precise, and the feasibility aspect 94% gave a very feasible assessment. This is shown that the Snadder Empathway game media is stated to be very useful, very appropriate and very feasible as a supporting media for group guidance services to foster empathy for junior high school students. Based on the results of development and trials that have been carried out, the Snadder Empathway game media shows an excellent level of acceptability. However, this study still has limitations, including that the trials carried out are limited to the number of students and certain school contexts, and have not tested the effectiveness of game media widely in improving students' empathetic behavior. Therefore, further research is recommended to conduct effectiveness tests using experimental or quasi-experimental designs covering a wider range of subjects, as well as developing and adapting Snadder Empathway game media at other levels of education or different guidance and counseling services.

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Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

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